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FUGITIVES

By ISABEL MOORE

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THE SPIRIT OF YOUTH.

(Published in *The New York Observer*, April, 1909.)

Away off in the heart of the Rocky Mountains a tiny baby River lived.

Its cradle was a lake fringed round with crystals, and during all its infancy the Snow-Caps guided its uncertain footsteps. They were not very friendly, those old Snow-Caps, with their great seamed faces and their brows that often frowned at the laughter of the River. But a baby knows too much to be afraid! It laughed at the sun and played with the sunbeams; it laughed at the wind to which the fir trees bowed in homage; and at night it sometimes awoke and laughed at the stars in its lap.

As it grew older it grew just a little more serious, and there would creep into its heart the most wonderful pictures.

By and by something else happened. It began to be noticed by its companions, and this gave a pleasing sense of importance. Timid flowers nodded, the wind lingered, and the fir trees occasionally leaned their beautiful lengths across in greetings.

Then, one day, a hunter tried to make friends. He was a rough old chap, with cheeks as furrowed as those of the mountains, and eyes like bits of wintry sky. The River passed along very quietly till the darkness came, when it grew brave again, and played hide-and-seek with the Wind, rushing about heedlessly and laughing uproariously at each new tumble. Said the Hunter:

"Little River, let me sleep."

But the River only laughed with a sheer mocking cadence.

"Sweet Spirit of the River," said the Hunter, "do not be in such a hurry; you will not like the plains and cities."

This gave the River a first great serious thought, and it grew very silent for a time.

Then the Hunter slept.

* * * * *

Miles and miles away from the heart of the Rocky Mountains a broad, sweet-tempered River flows. It is very quiet and a little sad, but not unhappy, and in a low voice it murmurs:

"Content and service. Content and service."

O, pure, whole-hearted River! O, helpful, patient River! Your strength comes from the mountains of your youth. What wonder if an old-time friend, the Wind, wings words of love back to the grim old Snow-Caps?

AN APRIL FANCY.

(Published in *Life*, April, 1902)

A little Maiden Wind tiptoed her way across a meadow. So dainty were her footsteps that the new grass hardly bent beneath them, and so gentle her caresses that not a single flower-bud turned aside.

"What a sweet, sweet meadow," sighed the little Maiden Wind, catching her draperies in one hand and reaching out the other in gentlest greetings.

During all the day she loitered through the meadow, and toward nightfall she came near the entrance of a city. She had never seen a city, so, when a spirit of adventure (to which little Maiden Winds are liable) took possession of her, she wandered in.

To her great surprise she found the earth and air of the city cut into many passages and subtle turnings filled with human beings hurrying back and forth. She followed one man for a time, trying to discover why he hurried; but as she could not in the least understand his movements, she presently left him and amused herself by chasing stray things around corners and poking inquisitive fingers into all sorts of places never meant for the fingers of a little Maiden Wind.

But she soon wearied. The great noise that had been imprisoned in the passages troubled her. She was constantly thinking how much more comfortable it would be out in the meadow where there was room enough. Then it suddenly occurred to her that possibly the noise was lost; that even the rushing people might also be lost. Perhaps they were all seeking the meadow and could not find it!

Whereupon a great fear seized her that maybe she herself might never again see the beautiful,

beautiful meadow! And she felt a passionate terror of the great city, and began running wildly about, knocking into people and hindered by everything.

"O dear, O dear," screamed the little Maiden Wind, dashing herself against a wall, "I can't get out, I can't get out, I say," and she flung her arms up over her head.

Behind a basement window stood a City Child, pale and wistful. Outside, in an old box, some young plants lived; and they, too, were pale and wistful. At sight of them the little Maiden Wind burst into tears.

"You dear, dear things," she sobbed, taking them for a moment into her arms. "Have you *never* see the meadow? I must find the meadow, for without it I shall die."

And so, with sweet complaining, she passed on.

"Mother," said the City Child, who had watched a few big drops of rain come splashing out of a clear sky upon his flowers, "Mother, the wind is crying!"

THE TURQUOISE GOD.

(Published in *Poet Lore*, Autumn, 1906.)

The Turquoise God was born white; but—urged by the Sun whom all gods and men obey—he yielded to the power of secret flame and put on a beautiful azure, the colour of the “heart of heaven.”

Consequently Turquoise, even unto this day, is so in sympathy with the skies that it is always changing in shade: light blue when the heavens are clear, dull and sometimes green when the heavens are in a sullen mood. And, as sympathy with heaven is but the medium for the *sympathie humane*, so in turn does Turquoise guard its owner from evil by drawing upon itself any malignant influence: growing pale when there is danger, and in all things being so helpful that there has arisen a proverb among mankind which says: “A turquoise given by a loving hand carries with it happiness and good fortune.”

But all this has come about in the long ages that have elapsed since in the Valley of White Turquoise in the land of the Incas the Turquoise God that was born white obeyed the Sun and became blue.

Now the temple of the Sun stood in the City of the Kings, Coricaucha, which means the Place of Gold;—and certainly there was much gold in that place where, according to an old Chronicler, “every fountain, pathway and wall was regarded as a holy mystery.”

Among far-reaching fields of maize stood the Temple, builded of stone, simple and solid, as befitted the earthly dwelling of the deity who presided over the destinies of man; who gave light and warmth to the nations; whose breath was life to the vegetable world; who was the

father of the royal dynasty; and the founder of the Empire of the Incas. And far beyond the plateau on which it stood, toward the distant, magic west of the world, stretched the crests of the frozen Andes.

Upon the chief altar of the Temple burned the sacred flame, cared for by the Virgins of the Sun. This was the holy of holies. At the west end of the Temple was emblazoned a representation of the face of the Sun God, glancing in all directions through innumerable shafts of golden rays; and so placed that the Sun himself, when rising and shining in at the eastern entrance, looked directly upon his prototype and lighted the whole edifice with fresh young glory. And, opening from the great chamber with its frieze of heavy gold, were various chapels sacred to the other deities: silver-faced Moon Goddess, mother of the Incas; the sparkling stars; the iridescent Rainbow; and the mighty gods of Thunder and Lightning.

These were the greater gods. Near them, like satellites, were the lesser gods, of whom the Turquoise God was one. But, although he was a lesser god, he was a very ancient god, associated with Crystal, the creator of the world, whom the Incas had found among their predecessors in the land and who was yet older than their Sun God.

It was during the Feast of Raymi, of the summer solstice, when the Sun God returned to his people from the South, that the White Men came. There had long been predictions of this coming of a gleaming people, new children of the Sun. The oracles had said that the race of the Incas should become extinct with the twelfth Inca, who was now upon the throne. There was strife between the royal brothers. Comets had been seen in the heavens. Earthquakes had

shaken the land. The moon had been en-ringed with fire of many colors. A thunderbolt had fallen upon one of the royal palaces and burned it to ashes. An eagle, chased by hawks, screaming in the air, had been seen to hover above the great square of Cuzco; and was pierced by the talons of his tormentors. The king of birds had fallen lifeless in the presence of many of the Inca nobles, and the wise men read in the event an augury of their own destruction.

Pilgrims were assembled, prostrate and breathless, for the first rays of the Sun God to strike his golden likeness in the Temple at the time of the Feast of Raymi. Conch and trumpet and atabal brought forth barbaric melodies. The royal mummies, with their robes profusely ornamented, were seated in gold-embossed chairs, to welcome the Sun God.

Then came the White Men, Pizzaro and his followers, in the name of the Holy Vicar of God and the Sovereign of Spain.

Like thunder clouds, dense masses of warriors closed down upon the slopes of the mountains. There advanced a forest of crests and waving banners; of lances and battle-axes edged with gleaming copper. The ground shook with the tread of heavy cavalry. A trumpet sounded a prolonged note, and the Spaniards descended upon the beautiful and sacred city as it lay lapped in its verdant valley. They went directly to the square in front of the Temple. They proclaimed that the dynasty had fallen; the sceptre forever passed from among the Incas.

Before this race of dazzling strangers, dropped from the clouds, the people fled. And it was not many days before flame enveloped the city of Coricaucha. Towers and huts and halls and palaces went down before it. Graves were rifled of their buried jewels; human beings were

tortured to extort hidden treasure; the royal mummies were stripped of their ornaments. The ancient seat of empire was laid in ashes—all but the Temple which stood ever forth against the flame—while the shadowy Andes looked down upon it all.

So did the Spaniards to their brethren who became "a flock without a fold." And on the Temple of the Sun they raised the Cross of Christ.

The old gods fled. Only the Sun God, who in his manifold greatness could not desert his people, visited again that land.

* * * * *

Along the narrow streets and by the banks of the crystal river that flowed through the city, hastened the Turquoise God. On through the straggling borders of houses along the outer edge of the city, on and again on among the rocks and waterfalls and woods, as though the Spaniards were close behind. Indeed they did hunt for him, for their appetite for gold had been somewhat appeased.

But he eluded pursuit by a hundred leagues, north by the great highway of Cuzco. Along the Cordillera of the Andes over South America and the Isthmus, he entered into the land of the mighty Aztecs and the kingdom of Anahuac, where the war god, Mexitli, had builded his city at the direction of the eagle. And there he found a state of affairs curiously like that in the land of the Incas. Destruction and pillage by the omnipresent White Men were raging; the temples were in ruins; the older gods had fled.

In that land the Turquoise God received the name of Chalchihuitl while he dwelt for a little space upon Turquoise Mountain; and, later on, hid in a cave where years and years afterwards were the famous turquoise mines of the Cerillos.

But nowhere could he find a safe retreat. So on he fled, northward, ever keeping near the ridge of the Great Divide, and passing the whole length of the *tierra caliente*: and yet again beyond the vast tablelands where the hills stretch away and ever onward to the north. And on all the country round about over which he wandered, the Turquoise God left azure footprints.

In the land of his final exile, among the *mesas* of the Zunis, he at last found refuge and a companion.

The Goddess of Salt had for a very long time been greatly troubled by the people near her domain on the seashore who took away her snowy treasures without paying tribute, and so she forsook the ocean and went inland.

But the people of New Mexico followed after her; and she, wearied to death of them, declared she would pass from their view forever, and penetrated further and further inland. Whenever she stopped beside a pool to rest she turned it salty; and she wandered so long about the great basins of the west that much of the water in them is very bitter.

Then it was that she and the Turquoise God met and travelled on together hand-in-hand. Each had the same need of companionship. Each had lost all of this world except themselves. Therefore they came to live for each other and to love each other very happily.

Presently they came to a wonderful *mesa*, guarded by a high wall of sandstone. This wall they broke through, making a great arched portal to their dwelling.

But the Goddess of Salt hit her head against the portal when passing under it and broke off one of her beautiful plumes so that it fell outside.

And there it lies unto this day.

ISLAND POSSESSIONS.

I

An island is a jewel of earth: a jewel because earth-born and not in despite of so being.

It was on a transcendent day, crisp, sunshiny, wind-driven, that I lifted my enraptured gaze from the crested blue waters parting with a clean stroke at the steamer's prow, and beheld the vision. Mackinaw, the Michilimackinac of the Indians, rose out of the bosom of its straits sheer at the eastern end, low-lying at the western, a realization of all dreams, a picture for the soul, the ideal lighted a-tip-toe on the world from distant realms of beauty. No valiant seeker for the holy grail inadvertently chancing on his heart's desire could have been more stilled with satisfaction. I knew instantly that I had come into mine own.

We drew near the wonder. Great cloud shadows massed across its woods and fields. The westering sun shot occasional glances from the virile sky. A motley collection of wharves and sheds and decrepit piles and island craft indicated the center of human activity; while, in a dazzling white zig-zag down the hill behind the fishing village, the wall of the road leading to the ancient fort stood out in sharp design. Here and there on the near-by hills were block houses and fortifications, all of the same snowy white that only fresh whitewash can give to dilapidated structures. Although unknown to me at the time, Mackinaw is really not unlike in appearance some out-dated, fortified island of the Old World.

A solstice of delight followed. We lived in tents on the bluff underneath Robinson's Folly. The members of the camping party, even my own relatives, are to me—and indeed were then

—like wraiths of another sphere coming and going in meaningless fashion among the genuinely serious interests of life. The tents themselves stand out as clearly in my recollection as they stood literally against their background of pines and cedars. I loved the tents. There were five of them besides the large central one, beyond which was the lean-to kitchen built of boughs where our colored cook performed prodigies of valour like the skilled prestidigitator that he was. Before the tents a steep, low-wooded declivity sloped to the shore of gleaming boulders and the tumbling waters of Lake Huron that stretched southward. The tents, yes, I loved the tents, every flap and rope and peg of them! We lived in them for eight weeks.

Robinson's Folly was a steep cliff rounding the southeastern edge of the island. On its top cedar trees grew in thickets and among them, following the contour of the cliff, a straggling riband of a footpath led the adventurer on and on toward the natural curiosity of wave-worn stone called Arch Rock. This little path, so friendly and yet so daring, was a bit of reality that led through the enchantment, a clew to the labyrinthian maze. With it I have strange associations. I knew it well; but it was not until many years afterwards that I began to dream about it. I was in a foreign country when the dream first happened, a trifle homesick, and quite unbidden there came crowding upon me thoughts of the old camping-ground, Robinson's Folly, and the resistless, wayward path along the eyebrow of the bluff at whose base broke the fresh-water surf. That night I was there in my troubled sleep, with the unaccountable amplification that as I was running (a child again) the way I used to run on that path gathering momentum for a dash up a succeeding incline

everything quite suddenly ended, the path, the dream, and myself, at the very spot where the slight downward grade changed into the upward grade.

I thought no more of the matter. Then, several years later, I again dreamed the same dream—a child running down the path along the bluff of Robinson's Folly—and stopped again at identically the same point. During succeeding years I have dreamed this dream a half dozen times perhaps, apparently with nothing in my outer life to suggest it, and always breaking off short at that same spot, which not only marks the change in the momentum of the runner, but from which there can be had a glimpse of a strange, cone-shaped rock embedded in the shore. Who can interpret the significance of this dream recurrence? Why should everything always become suddenly blotted out at just that place? Sometimes it has seemed like a premonition. Can destiny decree my return someday to Mackinaw, a walk along the familiar path, and an extinction of my being at that particular dip in the way? I never stopped there when I was a child.

There were other children in the camping party, two boys. The elder played with me entirely, possibly because he had no contemporary and preferred an adoring small girl to a boy so youthfully inferior as to make his questioning of mandates an insult. He and I devised one sport that we cared for above all others. The paraphernalia consisted of a barrel stave with a hole bored in one end of it, through which was tied a stout rope; and the game itself was to float this barrel stave, one of us balanced nicely upon it, while the other gently played out the rope from the beach. We did this turn about, and the score ran neck and neck all summer as to which

could go the farthest before losing his equilibrium. The end of the long wharf was the outermost limit of achievement, and it is altogether a wonder that we neither of us was drowned, for the upsets were many. It was an interesting accomplishment in its way. I wonder how many people could do it, young or old. It requires confidence and perfect balance and unswerving attention to the matter in hand, so that, quite unconsciously, in our play, we became experts of poise. I am inclined to believe that only very young human beings could do it at all.

There were Indians at Mackinaw then. Tamed Indians, it is true, and yet not so tamed but that they were a fairly good sample of the breed. I followed then in fascinated silence, whenever I had a chance, to their tiny settlement where the squaws wove baskets and fashioned various articles out of birch bark for sale at Fenton's Bazaar. They also made delightful *mococks* of birch bark, ornamented with porcupine quills and filled with soft, powdery maple sugar of a consistency different from that of any other maple sugar. These were five cents apiece. The curio shop was at the head of the long wharf, not far from the old John Jacob Astor House, an hotel that was once the original office of the big trading company and in which could be seen its early account books.

It is thirty years since I knew Mackinaw. I am told it has become very fashionable; that even the Mission House was finally overrun with people; that the cottages of wealthy Chicagoans and Detroiters are everywhere; that the native Indian-French-English population no longer earns its living by fishing, but by serving the intruder. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

II

A trip to the coast of Maine several years later is a much less distinct remembrance than Michilimackinac. Although a long summer was spent at Mt. Desert, only two pictures stand out prominently amid the sailing, the fishing, and the beach camp-fires. One of these is the journey from Portland up the coast, when the whole world seemed to be wrapped in an iridescent, drifting fog through which now and then stray islands broke or peeped or shimmered. Mouse Island particularly enchained my fancy. I longed to stop there. But our relentless and persistent steamer bore us away into yet more distant magics. The whole day was a fairyland. Islands, islands, in every direction.

Late in the season, after one of the innumerable sails up Somes Sound in the yacht of which we had the exclusive use, we were one night becalmed. All that day a fair breeze had stood by, but at sundown it flickered out. We were miles away from our hotel. The party was too large to be contained in the yacht's one small rowboat. Unless we wanted to spend the entire night on the yacht, a contingency for which none were prepared, the only way to return was for three or four to go in the rowboat and send as quickly as possible other boats to take off the remaining members of the party. It would be a slow return at best. But it was that return, about two o'clock in the morning, in a boat almost level with the dark, cold waters, that constitutes the other picture. At every dip of the oars, strokes that were long, leisurely and even, into the mysterious liquid over which we were gliding, myriad phosphorescent bubbles and balls and tortuous twistings broke into life, trailing off into the depths with golden uncertain

ramblings. Or, again, the appearance of the sea was as if a million golden ducats had been suddenly emptied overboard.

Above was another world of golden sparkles, for it was a clear, cool, calm, starlight night. Our small and insignificant craft seemed suspended in the universe—for an illimitable period. Time and eternity had found each other.

III

Two-thirds of the way across the Atlantic from New York lie "certaine flitting isles," at once pastoral and barren, possessed of forbidding crags as well as of laps and hollows of moss-like fields. They sleep through the centuries in what has been called Azorean Torpor, do these nine islands of the lost Atlantis. What matters it to them that they may be the only existing monument of a traditionary civilization? That Poseidon perhaps once ruled the continent that gave them birth? That the daughters of the Hesperides are said to have guarded their precious apples somewhere near by? That Plato recorded the vanished glories of the Atlanteans? That a gigantic statue is said to have once existed on the island of Corvo—sometimes called by sailors the Isle of Marco because they use it in their reckonings—astride the bare back of a horse: cut out of the solid rock; bareheaded; wrapped in a *capa com bedem*; one hand resting on the mane of his horse and the other extended, the fingers folded with the exception of the index finger which pointed to

"the golden remote wild west where the sea without the shore is?"

Like Sir Richard Grenville I "fell in" with the Azores, and the falling was due to the invalidism of a relative for whom a puzzled physi-

cian had recommended a sea voyage as a nerve sedative. We sailed for them in the *Barque Veronica* from New Bedford, and were three weeks going over, a resplendent memory in itself. Perhaps, however, crossing the Atlantic in a sailing vessel is an experience best enjoyed in one's youth. Mature years feel too keenly the material deprivations. Almost invariably and of necessity the food is poor, the drinking water tepid, the bathing facilities limited. Yet to a child such a trip may be a perfected enchantment. Ah, the good *Barque Veronica*! She was wrecked many years later in a storm off one of the Madeiras. Disabled, she drifted out to sea and was drowned. With her perished all the crew with the exception of the Captain, Narcisse d' Azevado and my particular friend, the steward, José de Costa, who was miraculously saved in some way the details of which I have never learned. He was a tall, lean Portuguese, with a face as beautiful and clear-cut as that of some old, fine, shell cameo; and his restrictions on plum duff were rigorous where I was concerned, for he could never be prevailed upon to give me a third helping.

We visited all of the nine islands. Over them, although out of the range of those the farthest west and east of it, presides Pico, the weather prophet of the isles that is so suggestive of the pictures of Fujiyama. In Fayal, directly opposite, we lingered three days. A letter of introduction to Consul Dabney there ensured us the most hospitable attentions. At Terceira I spent several hours in the care of the ship's doctor, climbing the heights of the fortifications above Angra where the captive African king was always busy in the docile employment of basket weaving; eating fruit in the Public Gardens; buying gourd water bottles in the market; and

noting with interest the great variety of ox-carts.

But it is St. Michaels—the *insula bella* of the group—that I know best and love best. We stopped at the little English hotel, and it has always been one of my happiest associations; an unconscious setting to many a romantic tale as I have read it; a center of peace around which have revolved the phantom phases of my own life. No matter what changes have occurred, no matter how tumultuous events have been, I have always held a sweet inner consciousness that there was one place in the world which remained unchangeable in its serenity, its garden fragrances, its human kindlinesses.

One of the people I met was a lady living by herself in a pictorial old house, one of the large family connections of the historian Prescott. It was her mother, William Hickling Prescott's aunt, who acted as his amanuensis when he, only nineteen years old, visited his grandfather who was then United States Consul at Ponta Delgada; and she showed me in her album a faded photograph of a daguerreotype of her famous cousin taken during his stay there. The garden belonging to this lady was undoubtedly one of the sweetest gardens there ever was; and beyond it stretched an orange grove. It is said that in the days when St. Michaels oranges were grown in large quantities for shipment to England, the fragrance of the blossoms could be often smelled by seamen who were out of sight of land.

Forty miles to the south of St. Michaels is the island of Santa Maria, "a place of no great force," as the Earl of Cumberland once upon a time described it. To me it was always intensely interesting because of its associations with Christopher Columbus, who likewise "fell in" with the Azores, or at least with this one of

them, on his return voyage from his discovery of the New World. Washington Irving tells the story in his *Life* of him whom the Spaniards called "the Stranger of the Threadbare Cloak:"—how a terrific gale caused him to run alongside the little isle for shelter; how, in fulfillment of his vow, he intended to land there and give thanks to the Virgin for his preservation; how he met with hostilities from the Portuguese Governor so that he himself dared not land; how half of his men did go ashore, however, and walked, barefooted and in their shirts, to the hermitage of Our Lady of the Angels; how they were taken prisoners by the troops, but were finally released. The Chapel of Our Lady of the Angels still stands, practically as it was then, and almost unknown to collectors of *Americana*.

Islands have much to give, for "all that is beautiful belongs to all who love it."

IV

England and Manhattan are said to be islands. But, however insular geographically, they are not islands in spirit. They are continents. And the happenings on continents are history, either personal or general, rather than chance joys.

How many islands, real islands, one would love to know! The Indies, East and West; the Scilly Isles; Cyprus; Iona; the Balearics; and Mauritius, that is said to rise and fall, however imperceptibly, with the tides of the sea. Then there are the hordes of vanishing isles that yearly are being washed away, sinking, sinking, sinking to that from whence they came. A liking for islands becomes an obsession.

One that lies at our doors and affords much pleasure if taken rightly is Staten Island. But

it must always be borne in mind that it is what we ourselves bring to the enchantment that serves as interpreter.

There are places in the southern end of Staten Island, particularly off over the Dongan Hills, that afford a true breathing-place to the lungs and soul of a pent-up New Yorker. More than once in Springtime or in russet Autumn have I dropped earthly cares, taken the ferry across the bay, and renewed myself. When I first began doing this I was led on by a hope of finding two old Dutch windmills that are said to have once stood a few miles beyond South Beach. Alas, I never found even a vestige of them. They had gone the way of all flesh long before my day. But I found a wooded hillside, part of an ancient dismantled estate, where squirrels ran riot among the oak trees; and from which could be glimpsed the boundless sand dunes and coppery salt marsh grasses mowed down by the winds. It was one of Nature's Snug Harbours; an isle within an island; one of those "isles of idleness" that has ever held my soul in "lingering duresse."

From the beach below Fort Wadsworth I beheld the conflagration of Coney upon one of the occasions when it was destroyed only to rise again, phoenix-like, from its own ashes. The time was twilight and the sky and sea were almost the same colour, a sad slateiness. Suddenly a giant monster of flame and smoke sprang into being, throwing lurid light through the slateiness to the zenith above my head and the silent water-line at my feet. One vast hand of the monster crumpled eagerly along the roofs of Coney, gathering them in like so much tissue paper, the other flung disaster recklessly to right and left. From my distant point of view the whole performance was startling in its absolute

silence. Not very long after, the monster, gorged and weary, sank to a replete repose. Only occasional belchings of smoke and fitful gleams of flame on the nearer sky and sea recorded the holocaust.

I have never been to Coney Island. When people speak of its awesome pleasures, I revert imaginatively to the only version of Coney known to me. Nobody else knows that. Nobody else can ever know it. I gloat over the possession. It is a picture. A picture typical of grim force; of the elemental power of fire before which man's creations become as if they had never been; of a riot of colour such as no painter has ever dared; of silence ineffable.

V

So in this work-a-day world we now and then chance upon island possessions, like oases in "the desert of the sea."

Somewhere, sometime, there must be an ultimate island. Will it be one of those fugitive, alluring, vanishing visions that led St. Brennan on and out across tumultuous and uncharted wastes? Never was a mad chase after bliss more elusive than his.

But perhaps all Islands of the Blest are not so unattainable. Let us ship with a stout heart as able seamen and sail away.

At the vanishing-point on the horizon:—there will be the ultimate island. However we steer our course, good old-fashioned faith in Providence and the quintessence of Bohemianism become almost undistinguishable one from the other by the time we reach the vanishing-point.

THE ICE DRAGON AND THE SUN GOD.

(Published in *Poet Lore*, Spring, 1908.)

In the far and gleaming North lay the Ice Dragon, fast asleep. His great lazy length was coiled and looped among the icebergs; his head was pillowed against the North Pole; the Aurora Borealis cast shafts of stately light across his repose.

After infinite slumber, certain slight dreamings half disturbed him. He moved uneasily, and his ragged fins cracked against the icefloes so that the sound was somewhat like a bitter wind among icicles. The shifting lights gleamed pellucid on his green and scintillating skin, while an occasional shaft revealed the colour of his sides, and that colour was of a dull orange. But the ridge of his whole great tortuous body was luminously black, like black crystal.

Gradually he raised his eyelids, heavy with the hoar rime of sleep, and the orbs of his eyes were like twin winter sunsets, round and very large, with a straight horizon line across the center of each. Above this line was the half of a pupil, like a setting sun in a cold sea, from which orange and lemon lights were reflected in the semicircle of the eye below the horizon line.

The polar ice loosened somewhat. The Ice Dragon uncoiled himself, and, slowly swaying from side to side, shook himself free. Quivers of life travelled up and down his orange colored sides. The sunset lights of his eyes became more lurid than they had been heretofore. Lazily he rolled like a porpoise at play; making his way into a more open space, lashing the half-frozen waters with his mighty tail. Dim vapours beset his eyes.

A glacier, long encradled among the ice mountains, he now descended on waves of ava-

lanche. Young, trembling trees were swept aside. Boulders were flung high out of his imperious way. Monarchs of the forest yielded unquestioning homage. Wild crags were hurled and crushed before him. On, on, and yet again on, across all the lands of the earth he made his progress.

Then, quite unexpectedly, he met the Sun God.

The Sun God had come up from the home of gold where the valley floor is as green as emerald; where butterflies of great size and of luminous iridescent colours are ever fluttering about, and where birds of sweet song and gorgeous plumage rest in the foliage of the fruit trees. The skies above him are always of serene sapphire blue. And the river running through that valley is as the fountain of life itself; indeed, it is the Fountain of Life.

Across the brow of the Sun God was writ in the spirit of flame the word *Abracadabra*, which is his name among certain ancient peoples of the world, and in his right hand he carried a divining rod whose magic power was that of alchemy to transmute all base metals into gold. His beautiful hair of light streamed like golden banners up into the radiant skies.

Wonderful was the combat that ensued between the Ice Dragon and the Sun God. Day after day they struggled. First one was victorious and then the other was victorious. Earth, the battlefield, shook beneath the weight of contest. Moist equatorial winds and gentle rains were urged by the Sun God into his service to cloud the vision of his adversary; and the streaming mists from the deadly contortions of the Ice Dragon were lifted by the Sun God unto himself.

Finally the potent Sun prevailed. Before the omniscient forces of light and heat the convulsive struggles of his foe died down. The Ice Dragon became entirely lost and incorporated into the Nirvana of Flame.

Then said the Sun God:

"I am the Soul of the World."

And the whole earth became joyous and fair to look upon.

"I temper the steel of the world."

And the earth approached him.

"Where light shines there also force radiates."

And the valleys unfolded.

"I am the symbol of Eternity."

And butterflies came into existence.

"The heat of motion expands the soul."

And the metamorphosis of secret flame—inspiration—sprang upward in agitated rapture.

The Sun God ran his hands along the sides of the mountains, and forests leaped forward at his touch—forests whose golden lights and thousands of sylvan genii greeted their Master with song. Praises of the great Spirit of Life resounded also from the mountain heights. Waters came leaping and laughing down from the upland valleys. Rainbows shimmered. The Sun God plucked the leaves of the trees, breathed upon them, and they flew away upon the air as birds.

Always upon the lips of the Sun God was the sweet word *Aprilis*, which meaneth "to open." It was the password of his law. It was the eric of his wisdom.

Then the Sun God rested after his triumph: while throughout the length and breadth of the land went the proclamation:

"The Sun God has laid his invisible hand upon the earth."

The Red Men said:

"The Ice Dragon is slain."

The White Men merely noticed that Spring had come again.

And Women said:

"We must have new garments. What are the present fashions?"

DESTINY.

Deep in the northern forests lived a Pine Tree. She was young and strong, and there breathed from her the Spirit of the Joy of Life. At all times did she whisper pleasing thoughts into the still, sweet solitude of her own heart.

During the summers, birds from afar rested within her arms; breezes sighed out their melodies for her understanding; gentle rains freshened her; grey and red lichens spread themselves at her feet.

During the winters, hail stung her sharply; snows cast their weight upon her; wet cloud encircled her head; the cold caused her to tingle and exult.

She loved her life, nor knew that what she loved could be to her undoing.

But there came a day when the knowledge of this was given her. It was at the time of the year when all things were ripe; when, for almost a week, a somber silence had hung over the hill-sides and the leaves of the forests had hardly dared to breathe. Even the squirrels had ceased their gibbering and looked askance. Then the Master of the Storm bestirred himself. Wild creatures crept to hiding. A steady whispering of conflict spread itself abroad. The clouds became dark as night and swirled like the seething in a cauldron. Lightnings quivered. Thunders broke through all the uproar. The rain beat down. The forests bent their heads.

When the Storm had passed and the shy Sun gave a watery look around, he saw that the Pine Tree had been scorched and seared. She stood as erect as ever; as tall as ever; as unfaltering as ever; but, from the crown to the ground, a great, twisted, gaping wound had driven into her very heart. She was bereft of her symmetry; bereft

of her graceful outreaching lengths; bereft of the Joy of Life.

For many months the Pine Tree stood half dead. Then, in one fair springtime, a slight stirring of the sap awoke a dim consciousness. The stirring quickened; and, in one place less numbed than the rest, a few tender twigs crept forth.

Finding the outer world genial, the tender twigs enlarged and throve until they formed quite a cluster two-thirds up the trunk of the Pine Tree. And they whispered into the wounded heart:

"There is still something to live for."

"Possibly," said the Pine Tree.

"Life is very beautiful."

"I know that," said the Pine Tree.

Then she made a great effort and roused herself and threw out more twigs.

But, when she had done all that she could, there still remained the deep scar of her heart and her sheer naked length towering far above the bushy green, up, up, toward the eternal sky.

Finally, she ceased all effort. The green clung to her sides and flourished somewhat as she stood—waiting.

Yet, even in her shattered plight, so strong and high was she that an eagle rested on her topmost branch.

AT THE END OF THE TRAIL.

I

The Canyon of Chaco is one of those long and mighty gulches that have been cloven by the torrents of past and changing ages down, down, and yet again down, from the heights of the grim old snowcaps to the level of the prairies where it finally debouches in great waves of earth suggesting the undulations of a grey-green sea that, ever rising and yet ever beaten down by a compelling wind, now and then, in wanton playfulness, flings out upon the air a snatch of gleaming spray.

Upon the crest of these transfixed billows, and almost within the jaws of the Canyon of Chaco, there rests a lap of park-like land, fringed about its outer edges with gnarled and twisted tamaracks, through the venerable branches of which the night winds always croon. Their roots cradle a thicket of wild roses; and, far above and beyond them, the Navajo Mountains form a jagged line of white against the skies.

A man passed—one night many years ago—along the trail that had been trodden by the feet of passing men on the lowest level of the Canyon. His movement was quiet and rapid; and an Apache would have noted that he walked in the Mexican manner, with his toes turned out.

Over his sinewy shoulders was slung a white buffalo hide, caught by a clasp of roughly hewn green turquoise wrought with the workmanship of an ancient people.

In one hand he carried a club that had been curiously carved from the horn of a giant elk.

As the defile opened suddenly beyond the tamaracks he came to a cautious halt.

Directly before him was the unexpected glow of a newly made fire, and his quick eyes discerned a rim of dark human forms sitting and lying about on the ground. All was silence, except for the occasional falling of an ember, the wind in the tamaracks, and the near-by bubbling of a spring that nourished the wild rose thicket.

The stranger threw himself full length on the ground to study details. These men before him were not preparing for slumber, he concluded. Their attitude was that of waiting for the happening of an event.

About the fire they had built a gigantic *corral* of the logs of pinyon wood, cedar, and juniper, interwoven with brush. On the far side of this "Circle of Darkness"—as it was called by those who made it—what seemed to be *Shaman* moved in and out among the shadows; and close to its inner circle squatted a dozen or more Apache youths, with drums placed before them.

The stranger crawled slowly forward, with great care and an odd precision of motion, until he was quite close. Then he rested a moment, for he felt himself to be heavy with the weariness of the body—having already lost four sleeps in succession.

Suddenly, he arose to his full height. He straightened himself far beyond a perpendicular position until he was like a well drawn and thoroughly seasoned bow, and—himself the sturdy arrow likewise, sent to the bulls-eye of his own strong purpose—strode fearlessly into the ring of firelight that revealed his presence. The light also showed a lock of white hair in the tangled mass of black, that hung strangely over his left temple in such a way as to suggest a mislaid tuft from his buffalo skin.

There was an instant alarm. There was a confused reaching out for weapons. There was

a throttled murmur of menace.

Quickly, the stranger laid his horn club before him on the ground, indicating by this action that he placed himself at their mercy.

"I claim the right of asylum," he said in a strange *patois* of Spanish and the Apache dialect.

The dark men paused.

One of the Chiefs stepped out in advance of the others. Paint was streaked fantastically across his cheeks; his arms and wrists were adorned with bracelets; a pair of short skin leggings encased his legs; and his breechclout was held by a girdle of human skin. From his shoulders fell a hide jacket that was fringed with scalp locks; and his own long hair was adorned with a profusion of eagle feathers that had been dyed red.

This personage advanced with a swaying motion like that of a python snaring its prey.

"What is your people?"

"I am of the people of the First of the Seven Lineages whose only God is the Sun."

"And what of them?"

"They are the Nation of the Seeds of Flowers."

"From what lands?"

"From the Place of the Herons."

"And of what clan art thou?"

"Of the Clan of the Wolf that is white."

"What know we of the Wolf that is white?"

"The Wolf that is white is he before whom the Chinchimecas hide their face."

"Where did the Chinchimecas hide their face?"

"Upon the banks of the Great Lake."

"When was this?"

"The Chinchimecas hid their face in the day when the Voice fell from Heaven."

"What said the Voice from Heaven to the Chinchimecas?"

"The Voice from Heaven cried unto the Chinchimecas on that day when they hid their face, 'O, my Children, the time of your destruction is come!' It was as the voice of a woman in pain."

By this speech the Apaches knew that he belonged to the *Parcialidades*, the first of the seven great divisions of the Aztecs; and that he came from the province of *Aztlan* in Mexico that, according to the Spanish Chronicler, "continued a long time mightie."

A second stalwart warrior stepped into the light and said:

"Thou art then our brother. We are of the Coyote Clan."

"I am the Wolf of the Sun," said the first Chieftain.

"Me they call Lone Wolf," said the stranger.

Whereupon his right of asylum for the night was acknowledged by all, and he was conducted to the lodge of the Medicine Men.

During the latter part of the colloquy, the youths about the fire had begun a crooning chant to the accompaniment of slurred drum beats.

Presently a number of the others broke from the ring of logs behind which they had been crouching; and yelling like lost souls, formed in a circle about the now blazing fire. They were entirely naked and perfectly white, having smeared themselves with some substance that caused their bodies to glisten like marble. Each carried an unlighted torch of shredded cedar bark.

Gradually, almost creepingly, their irregular steps assumed a more decided swing; and as his fancy dictated, each adopted a pose—now that of a conqueror; then that of one who was

threatening a foe above him, or, again, striking a foe that was fallen. One warrior minced along like a village girl at a rustic dance. Another bowed gracefully to right and left as he circled.

Many darted toward the furnace in their midst, trying to light their torches at its outer edge. Again and again they tried this, sometimes singly and in one dash, and sometimes several of them in unison with an undulatory motion. Some cast themselves upon the ground and approached the blaze upon their stomachs like writhing serpents.

At last, one by one, they accomplished the feat. Then, all the torches flaming noisily, the capering, blanched figures began racing madly after each other around the roaring center. As it became possible for them to do so, they spat upon each other to secure the mystic protection of the Powers Invisible.

On, on they dashed; in a state of frenzied antics, all the time emitting piercing yells. Each lashing the Brave before him, or rubbing the fire-brand against himself, they soon became like maniacs, literally enveloped in flame.

Finally a brand of one of the fire magicians burned low and went out. Dropping it, he rushed from the Circle. In due time another; and then yet another; went forth. Before long they had all vanished.

An aged Medicine Man, accompanied by a youth, then arose, amid the monotonous whirring of the drums. The fire was rapidly dying down.

Presently, the Venerable One, taking a bowl from his assistant, lifted it high above his head and poured from it a slender stream of water upon the embers, pronouncing as he did so, in solemn tones, the Prayer of Dismantling.

As the night had advanced, its quiet stateliness had become troubled by brooding clouds that wound their way down from the fastnesses of the range.

The Apaches lay upon their backs and a great silence held them. To their understanding, a battle of the elements in mid-air, in that place and following their Dance of Death, was symbolic of a coming warfare between men, when the dead would lie on the bosom of the earth, and starvation and pestilence would stalk abroad. They believed that the Cini Cigini, or Sacred People, fought in the elements: and the Cini Cigini waged bitter conflict that night. Phantom cries rent the air. Flights of arrows hurtled. Occasional weapons clashed.

Gradually, towards dawn, the leaden heavens became less tumultuous and took on a less sombre hue. And, at last, across the undulating seas of prairie that stretched away to the eastward, there shot out a gleam of orange light as the Lord of Fire and Light and Life, in whose propitious ceremonial of the Death Dance the Apaches had just participated, lifted a heavy eyelid upon the world.

II

The Apaches were a proud and warlike race, not meriting, at this time, the title of 'Ishmaelites of the West' by which they were afterwards known. They were on the lands that had been theirs for generations: yet—after they destroyed in 1670 the Seven Cities of Cibola that "maketh shew to bee a faire citie" as says the Chronicler, Fray Marcos—the hand of every man turned against them.

Not only were they at bitter enmity with the Quiviras whom they had overcome, but also with the Spanish of the Mexican border. This

came about when several of the Zuni villages threw themselves upon the protection of the Apache-Navajos, against the Spanish subjugation which had been in process for a hundred and fifty years or more.

It had been a mistaken step on the part of the Zunis, the 'Silent People.' The temptation of seizing the helpless villages for their own was too great for the Apaches to withstand. Knowing well the spirit of their one time foes, but now needy suppliants, and that the strength of despair which had so long held out against the Spanish would enable them to resist their yet more ancient enemy, the Apaches assembled in great numbers, with reinforcements from the *people beyond*, as the Apaches called their tribal brethren, the Navajos, on the far side of the mountains. The appeal of the Zunis had been a desperate one; and now the Apaches would have not only the Zunis, but also the Spanish, to contend with.

Among the gathering were many clans and bands, such as the Apache Mojaves, and the Apache Yumas, and a few of the very blood-thirsty Chiricahua Apaches. There were also some of the cliff-dwelling Sobaypuris, and some of the Nakaydi or descendants of Mexican captives, the Tontos, and the Coyote Clan. When on the war-path, all these ramifications of the great Apache-Navajo tribe camped together and went into battle side by side against the common enemy.

It was the season when the buffaloes had migrated to the north; the season called by the grim Apache savages the "Mexican Moon" because of its being the time of their annual raids upon the Spanish frontier.

Near the borderland of what is now Texas, but which the Spanish called Isleta, the pueblos

of the Zunis—frail villages of poles and brushwood—dragged out their last few days of precarious existence. In the amber light of morning sunshine, after the storm, smoke curled up in dreamy spirals. Hundreds of mustangs dotted the upper plains, whose gentle undulations were of a rich velvety verdure studded with occasional sand lilies and flowering cactii.

Upon this inviting picture the Apaches swept down, about three thousand strong, from the towering western cliffs of milk-white quartz that were rimmed with deep green pine foliage.

A distant roar like that from a sea-shell, a small voice of an infinite noise, heralded their approach. Like a whirlwind of the desert they came, riding their little prairie trained ponies.

The villages were stricken with a palsy of terror. They had hoped till the last moment that their old time foes would grant them protection against the common enemy of the Spanish; that, as members of the great aboriginal families, the internal feud would be temporarily lost sight of.

But now they knew their fate. They were at the mercy of the yellow, painted demons: and, while certain warrior bands made ready to withstand the onslaught, these did it more as a matter of habit than of conviction, for they in reality shared the general feeling that their time had come.

Nothing short of a miracle could have saved them; and no miracle happened. War was begun in the usual infernal fashion. Blood was freely shed; cries and curses rent the air; the mustangs stampeded and, breaking into a lope, were soon at the vanishing point on the horizon. The fire demons were loosened and, in an incredibly short time, the Zuni pueblos—all that had remained of the famous Seven Cities of Cibola—were ruin and smoldering ashes.

Rushing furiously in the footsteps of slaughter and flame, the soldier of fortune, Ton-saroyoo, or Lone Wolf—he who had claimed the right of asylum—entered an adobe hut from the interior of which smoke was rising. A curtain of dressed buffalo hide hung at the entrance; and a small blue flame, dimly burning on a tripod in the center of the single room, fitfully lighted the interior so that he could distinguish a number of low couches ranged round the walls.

Seeing nothing that he wanted, he was about to go out again, when his knees knocked against something soft in the smoke.

Quickly on the defensive, he was about to strike a downward blow, when his vision cleared sufficiently for him to distinguish a slender little girl, whose eyes of sapphire blue were raised to him more in grief and wonder than in alarm. Something in her attitude of trust caused him to pause.

"My father, thou hast at last come for me," she said in Spanish.

As she uttered the words, she saw her mistake. Bursting into violent sobbing, she sank upon the hardened earth floor and clasped the feet of Lone Wolf.

With an unaccountable surge of tenderness in his heart, Lone Wolf lifted her up. She clung to him in an utter abandonment of grief, murmuring broken words. He noticed that in one hand she held a baked clay doll with curiously twisted arms; and, also, that about her throat she wore a tiny crucifix of the sacred Chalchihuitl or Turquoise.

"Friend, friend," she sobbed, "Is it not a friend?"

"Why not?" he whispered soothingly.

And, tossing her to his shoulder, he stole away with less noise in his going than an autumn leaf in its fall.

"Thy name, little one?" He spoke to her in the sweet Spanish diminutives from the first.

"Rosita Zamacona," she answered promptly.

"Rosita—little Rose—ay, thou art a little rose!"

That she was of good Spanish parentage there could be no doubt. Indeed, she herself knew that she was a descendant of one of those followers of Coronado who, a century earlier, had penetrated farther north than they were aware in their search for the Seven Cities of Cibola. Having settled among the tribes of the north of Mexico, they had in time become so identified with them as to be neutral witnesses of the conflict that came about at a later period between the Spanish and the Indians; and this child of brave and adventurous pioneers had the advantages of her Indian association with those of her inherited tastes and traditions.

Now, with no guardian and no playmate but this unknown hero who had come to her out of the smoke, she wandered on, day after day, over the face of the earth. Such is the chance of war and of women.

When she was weary, he carried her. When she was grieved, he solaced her. When she hungered, he gathered what he could from niggardly nature to satisfy her. For days and days they lived on the tips of willows and the bark of trees, regretting that the season of *tasajo* and pinyon nuts was not with them, and that they could derive no sustenance from the yucca weed, called by the Spanish Fathers "the candle-stick of Our Lord."

But every season was theirs in time, for almost a year and a half were they in crossing the land.

They covered leagues of dusty grey sage bush prairie, following Indian trails past the brown buffaloes grazing on the stilled heaving of the uplands: along the lines of silvery trembling cottonwoods that marked the course of some inverted river such as there are many of in the west, with their water underneath and their sandy beds on top, crossing the big ones on rafts and fording the small ones: skirting many villages and surmounting many *mesas*: seeing bleaching bones of many men and animals and the charred ashes of prairie fires. The Indian and buffalo trails were found by them in even better state of transit than were those found by de Soto and the early explorers.

Finally, threading through mountain passes, they struck into one of the great trails from east to west by which Cabeça de Vaca crossed the continent. Week after week, and month after month they went onward, led, as Lone Wolf explained to Rosita, by Michabo, the Great White Hare—by which he meant the Dawn of a New Day—Michabo, whose father was the West Wind and whose mother was the Moon. And he told her the Indian story of how Michabo had once upon a time made the wonderful earth upon which they were out of a grain of sand brought from the deepest part of the ocean: how he set it floating upon the waters until it grew to such a size that a young and mighty wolf, constantly running around it, died of old age before he reached the point from which he had started.

III

One morning in the light of the early sunrise, the wanderers were preparing for yet another day's journey, when they saw two men standing beside them on a bank of the river near where

they had slept. Both were white, one a venerable Spanish priest and the other a young Dutch trapper.

Greetings were exchanged in Spanish, which they all spoke, and Lone Wolf and Rosita were asked to breakfast with the others. After the frugal meal, they lingered on the bank in companionable silence. At last Lone Wolf roused himself, smiled, and said,

"The Zunis sit together in silence when they would know each other."

"An excellent custom," observed the Priest.

"A good preparation for the peace-pipe" said Lone Wolf.

He drew forth from a skin pouch a pipe of singular and beautiful workmanship. Carefully and slowly he filled it with a light colored tobacco, and passed it to Rosita. By an ember from their dying camp fire she lighted it and passed it back to Lone Wolf. With ceremonious movements, he then arose and stood facing the north.

"Father of the Dead, bear witness!" was the invocation that he uttered in low tones.

He bowed once to the Earth: he bowed once to the Sky: he bowed once to each of the four Cardinal Points. Next he handed the pipe to the Priest who, in turn, observed the same ceremonial and passed it on to the Trapper who, likewise, made obeisance to the Invisible Powers.

"You have journeyed far?" asked the Priest.

Lone Wolf told of his past life and recent wanderings, and of Rosita.

"We have come from the land of the White Men on the edge of the ocean," explained the young Trapper.

"A long travelling," said Lone Wolf.

"A long travelling," agreed the Priest.

"But we rest here," said the Trapper.

"How is that?" asked Lone Wolf.

"I am grown old and worn in the service of Mother Church," said the Priest. "My yearly circuit has been a large one, to far distant points where missions have been established. I can do no more. This youth—my son in Christ—he laid his hand affectionately on the Trapper's shoulder) has decided with me to make our final lingering on this spot. It is a central place for a trader in pelts. The dwellings of settlers are not far away."

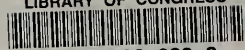
"We, too, will stop here," said Lone Wolf.

"Good!" cried the Trapper, his gaze seeking that of Rosita.

"You make a sudden decision," said the Priest, "but I believe you will not regret it. Nor shall we," he added courteously.

So they rested—these remnants of the older civilizations—at the end of the trail to which they had been led by Michabo, the Dawn of a New Day, whose father is the West Wind and whose mother is the Moon.

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